

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES
201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Telephone: 608-266-8684
Fax: 608-261-6972
www.dcf.wisconsin.gov



State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers

TO: **Child Care Eligibility and Authorization Workers
and Supervisors
Income Maintenance Supervisors
Income Maintenance Lead Workers
Income Maintenance Staff
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators**

DECE/BELP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 19-09 **AMENDED**

DATE: ~~02/21/2019~~ **02/27/2019**

Wisconsin Shares Child Care

FROM: Kath McGurk, Director
Bureau of Early Learning and Policy
Division of Early Care and Education
Department of Children and Families

**SUBJECT: March Updates to Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process
Handbook Chapters 1 and 2**

CROSS REFERENCE: Operations Memos [18-43](#), [18-45](#), [18-46](#), [18-48](#), [18-54](#), [19-J3](#), and [19-08](#)

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 2019

PURPOSE: This Operations Memo informs Wisconsin Shares Child Care local agencies that Chapters 1 and 2 of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook will be updated with the Operations Memos published from October 2018 to the current date.

BACKGROUND: Several key policy areas have been updated since the previous publication of the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook on October 1, 2018. Local agency staff are strongly encouraged to thoroughly review the new Chapters 1 and 2. Each change from the previous online version is highlighted in yellow in the online and the PDF versions of each chapter. Text removed from the manual is indicated by ~~red-strikethrough~~ in the PDF version only.

POLICY: The changes listed below will be incorporated and published in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Policy and Process Handbook on March 1, 2019. Changes that do not reference an Operations Memo are clarifications that were not published in an Operations Memo.

Chapter 1:

1.1.3 Local Program Administration: Removed redundant policy regarding determining eligibility. Removed language regarding the automated system security officer assisting providers, as this is now handled by the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

1.1.4 Confidentiality: Revised to provide specific policy regarding Safe at Home participants. Clarified that “highly confidential information” refers specifically to health information.

1.2.6 Signature Requirements: Clarified that a written RFA signature that has been collected on the CARES Worker Web (CWW) Application/Registration printed from CWW meets the signature requirement.

1.2.7 Initial Eligibility Determination: Clarified that the interactive interview, signature requirements, and verification requirements must all be completed before the local agency can determine eligibility. Clarified that the eligibility period is automatically set by CWW to be the first day of the month of the application filing date, and set to end on the last day of the 12th month following the eligibility begin month.

1.3.6 Social Security Numbers (SSNs): Revised policy to indicate that a parent has six (6) months to provide an SSN following the SSN Application Date rather than 90 days in accordance with [Operations Memo 19-J3](#). Added process regarding the alert workers will receive in CWW and updating the *Permanent Demographics* page.

1.3.7 Child Support Cooperation: Added policy that parents must cooperate with child support with regards to the child's biological parent regardless of subsequent marriages to a different partner. Added example to demonstrate this policy.

1.3.7.1 Failure to Cooperate with the Child Support Agency: Clarified that the system automatically tracks instances of noncooperation upon confirmation of case closure for noncooperation with child support (this is not new functionality).

1.3.8 Participation in Approved Activities: Clarified that participation in an approved activity must be verified during the application and eligibility determination process, during the annual eligibility renewal, and when an increase of authorization hours is requested.

1.3.8.2 High School: Removed policy regarding satisfactory progress; this no longer needs to be provided.

1.3.8.5 Participation in a W-2 Placement: Revised to indicate that although Case Management Follow-Up (CMF) and CMF+ placements are considered employment for Wisconsin Shares Child Care, if there are other activities on the parent's Employability Plan (EP) and the parent requests child care for those activities, those hours must be included in the authorization.

1.3.8.7 Basic Education: Reiterated that the local agency does need to determine if basic education will help the individual's efforts to maintain employment. Removed policy regarding satisfactory progress; this no longer needs to be provided.

1.3.8.8 Technical College or Course of Study Leading to Employment: Removed policy regarding satisfactory progress; this no longer needs to be provided.

1.3.8.9 Online Education: Removed policy regarding satisfactory progress; this no longer needs to be provided.

1.4.1.1 Maximum Gross Income for Initial Eligibility: Updated table to reflect 2019 Federal Poverty Level (FPL) amounts that were effective February 1, 2019, in accordance with [Operations Memo 19-08](#).

1.4.1.2 Maximum Gross Income for Ongoing Cases: Updated table to reflect 2019 State Median Income (SMI) amounts and corresponding FPL percentages that were effective February 1, 2019, in accordance with [Operations Memo 19-08](#).

1.4.2 Income that is Included in the Financial Eligibility Test: Revised to indicate that only Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments of adults in the Assistance Group (AG) are included as income in accordance with [Operations Memo 18-48](#). Revised to indicate that Social Security payments (including old age, survivorship, and disability) are included as income for all members of the AG, also in accordance with [Operations Memo 18-48](#).

1.4.3 Income that is Not Included in the Financial Eligibility Test: Revised to indicate that SSI payments of minor dependents are not included as income in accordance with [Operations Memo 18-48](#).

1.4.5.4 Self-Employment Income: Added cross reference to Process Help 16.2.3 for entering information on the Self-Employment page. Removed the process for entering this information from this section. Revised example to represent policy regarding Temporary Break that was effective November 1, 2018.

1.5.10 Non-Financial Eligibility Verification: Revised to include the Online Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Driver's License query as an acceptable source of verification for identity. Clarified that data exchanges, the DMV query, and verification of participation in the Safe at Home program are not photo IDs, but can still be used to verify identity. Clarified that U.S. Citizenship or Immigration status of children only needs to be verified for children for whom assistance is requested, not all children in the Assistance Group.

1.5.11 Approved Activity Verification: Clarified that taxes or Self-Employment Income Report Forms (SEIRFs) must be collected at application and renewal to verify the parent's approved activity. Clarified that if a parent begins self-employment during the eligibility period, the parent must provide a SEIRF to verify the new approved activity and expected income. Clarified that if the parent's approved activity of self-employment is questionable during the eligibility period, agency workers may request additional verification, such as receipts, contracts, or other documentation of expenses. Revised to indicate that the W-2 EP, FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Employment Plan (EP), and Learnfare Case Management Plan can be viewed in the Electronic Case File (ECF), requested from the other worker, or requested from the parent. Also removed policy for verification regarding satisfactory progress; this no longer needs to be provided.

1.5.12 Financial Eligibility Verification: Clarified that self-employment financial eligibility must be verified at application and renewal. Removed policy regarding expected change reminders in accordance with [Amended Operations Memo 18-46](#). Reorganized policy regarding when to use current taxes, previous year's taxes, or SEIRFs for clarity. Clarified that unearned income which is included in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care budget must be verified; income that is disregarded does not need to be verified. Revised policy regarding what information must be documented in CWW case comments when verbal contact is made with the Child Protective Services (CPS) agency to verify biological or adoptive parent income.

1.5.12.1 Ongoing Financial Verification: Clarified the impact to the authorization and the copayment per hour when financial verification is requested and not received during ongoing eligibility.

1.5.12.3 Verifying Employment Income for a SWICA Discrepancy: Added new policy and process regarding State Wage Information Collection Agency (SWICA) discrepancies received for a time period after November 1, 2018.

1.7.1 Financial Eligibility: Added table for determining 200% FPL for cases that include children placed with foster care parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, and relatives with court-ordered placement who receive a Kinship Care payment. Added process regarding what information should be entered on the *Child Care Manual Eligibility* page in CWW. Clarified policy regarding what information must be documented in CWW case comments when verbal contact is made with the Kinship Care Coordinator to verify receipt of the Kinship Care payment.

1.8.3.1 Early Renewals: Added new policy and process regarding when a parent can complete an early renewal.

Chapter 2:

2.1.1.2 Certified Child Care Providers: Clarified the specific agencies that are responsible for certifying child care providers.

2.1.2.2 Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract: Provided contact information for submitting Wisconsin Shares Participation Contracts and indicated the staff responsible for entering this information into the automated system (CSAW).

2.1.2.3 YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Contract Renewal and Grace Period: Clarified that Wisconsin Shares Child Care authorizations to a provider will systematically end on the last day of the grace period month if the provider does not complete their YoungStar or Wisconsin Shares Participation Contract renewal.

2.3.6 Authorization Begin Dates: Added policy regarding authorization begin dates following the annual eligibility renewal in accordance with [Amended Operations Memo 18-43](#). Removed “at Initial Eligibility” from title of this section.

2.3.7 Authorization Begin Dates During Ongoing Eligibility: Revised section to provide policy regarding authorization begin dates when the authorization assessment is completed more than 30 days from the Request for Assistance (RFA) date or date the annual eligibility renewal was completed (ongoing eligibility).

2.3.8 Authorization End Dates: Revised to indicate that shorter authorizations are allowed when the child care need requires it or when there is a situation similar to those described in the Short-Term Authorizations section.

2.3.10 Short Term Authorizations: Created new section for policy that short-term authorizations must be written for no less than seven (7) consecutive calendar days in accordance with [Operations Memo 18-54](#). Renumbered previous Section 2.3.10 Retro Authorizations accordingly.

2.4.3.2 Authorizing for Gaps Between Approved Activities: Rewrote section to be clearer about which gaps must be covered and which gaps the agency has discretion to cover. This section was only rearranged; no policy changes were made to this section.

2.4.3.6 Authorizations for New Self-Employment: Revised to indicate that an authorization written for the first 12 months of new self-employment may continue until the annual eligibility renewal following the 12th month of self-employment in accordance with [Amended Operations Memo 18-46](#).

2.4.3.7 Authorizations for Ongoing Self-Employment: Clarified that self-employment becomes ongoing and the authorization must be based on monthly adjusted self-employment earnings divided by Wisconsin's minimum wage only after the annual eligibility renewal that follows the 12th month of new self-employment in accordance with [Amended Operations Memo 18-46](#).

2.4.3.8 Self-Employed Foster Parents: Added example to demonstrate policy regarding self-employed foster parents, subsidized guardians, interim caretakers, and relatives with court-ordered placement receiving the Kinship Care payment.

2.4.4.2 HeadStart and 4K School Programs: Minor wording changes to align with the final text in [Amended Operations Memo 18-45](#). No changes were made to this policy.

2.4.7.2 Provider Discounts: Revised policy to clarify that CSAW will automatically determine the lowest of the three amounts (Initial Amount, Provider Price, and Agency Ceiling) when the worker enters a discount. The worker does not need to determine if the discounted price will be the lowest amount prior to entering the discount in CSAW.

~~**2.4.9.1 Authorizations in Situations of Hardship:** Added policy that a hardship situation also includes a foster or other placement child who changes placements. Removed text that local agencies must send hardship requests involving cases with foster or other placement children to the Wisconsin Shares Child Subsidy and Technical Assistance Line for decision; local agencies may now make this determination without Departmental review.~~

2.5.1 Copayments: Revised examples to reflect the new copayments per hour that will be effective April 1, 2019.

2.5.1.1 Calculating the Copayment in the Exit Copayment Period: Revised examples to reflect the new copayments per hour that will be effective April 1, 2019.

2.5.1.2 Assuming the Full Cost of Care: Revised examples to reflect the new copayments per hour that will be effective April 1, 2019, and the maximum rates that were effective January 1, 2019.

2.5.5 Changes in Subsidy Amounts during the Eligibility Period: Added policy regarding running eligibility with dates in CWW when necessary in order for CWW to correctly determine the income and AG size for the correct month, and for CSAW to correctly determine the copayment.

2.6 Parent Share: Revised example to reflect the new copayments per hour that will be effective April 1, 2019, and the maximum rates that were effective January 1, 2019.

CONTACTS:

For Wisconsin Shares Child Care policy questions outside of Milwaukee County contact your Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), Child Care Coordinators at BROCCPolicyHelpDesk@wisconsin.gov.

For Child Care CARES/CWW and CSAW Processing Questions statewide, and policy questions in Milwaukee County, contact the Child Care Subsidy and Technical Assistance line at: childcare@wisconsin.gov or (608) 422-7200.

DCF/DECE/BELP/ERR